

*Pers. Russell, Richard
Fritchey, Clayton*

CLAYTON FRITCHEY

Russell's CIA Words Cut 2 Ways

The showdown in the Senate over whether the Central Intelligence Agency is to be subjected to real surveillance has been temporarily postponed, but the chief opponent to a broadened supervision of the CIA has himself provided the best argument for doing precisely what he is opposed to doing.

The safety of the nation, as we have been learning, may very well depend on the outcome of the struggle between Sen. Richard Russell, D-Ga., chairman of the Armed Services Committee, and Sen. J. W. Fulbright, D-Ark., chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, over the efforts to enlarge the small Senate watchdog committee now charged with overseeing the CIA.

The so-called watchdog group is headed by Sen. Russell, and includes three other senators from the Armed Services Committee, plus three senators from the Appropriations Committee, but there are no senators from the Foreign Relations Committee which is supposed to advise and consult with the administration on the conduct of foreign policy.

Many of the most distinguished members of the Senate including Mike Mans-

field, the majority leader, have long sought (in vain) to create a new joint Senate-House committee to handle CIA affairs, just as a similar joint committee does with the super-secret Atomic Energy Commission.

Now, Fulbright and a large majority of the Foreign Relations Committee have voted for a compromise, which would add three members of this committee to Russell's seven-man watchdog group, but the Georgian is flatly opposed to any change.

Advocates of the plan contend that the watchdog committee's check on the CIA has been superficial and that the agency doesn't even bother to keep the group informed on many vital operations. Russell has denied this, insisting that the group has always fully carried out its mission, and has been adequately informed.

Now, however, Russell has confessed that he knew little about the CIA plan to invade Cuba, which was not only a disaster in itself but led to the most dangerous confrontation in post war history, the Cuban missile crisis.

"I only wish I had been consulted," says Russell, "because I would have strongly advised against this kind of operation if I had been." Here

is proof positive from Russell himself that the CIA not only did not consult the watchdog group, it didn't even deign to inform it.

The worst of this is that if Russell had been properly informed, and had then advised against the invasion, it might never have occurred, for Russell carried great weight with a president who already was very dubious about going ahead with the attack.

Today, alas, Russell angrily charges the Foreign Relations Committee with trying to "muscle in" on his domain, as if this committee had no responsibility for foreign policy. Actually, since the CIA is supposed to operate only in the foreign field, the Fulbright committee should have an interest superior to any other committee.

Sen. Russell also wants to exclude members of the Foreign Relations Committee on the grounds of security. He has made much of the danger of "leaks," the implication being that his group is to be trusted more than the Foreign Relations senators.

This is a debatable argument at best, but "security" is what the CIA always falls back on when it is threatened with serious congressional surveillance.

